

BACK TO THE MACHINEGUN

I awaken about noon and go out to get the mail
in my old torn bathrobe
I'm hungover
hair down in my eyes

barefooted
tenderly stepping upon small rocks and branches

still afraid of pain behind my four day beard

as the young housewife next door shakes a rug
out of her window and sees me:
"hello, Hank!"

god damn, it's almost like being shot in the ass
with a .22

"hello," I say
gathering up my VISA card bill, my PENNYSAVER,
the Dept. of Water and Power

plus a notice from the Weed Abatement Department
giving me 32 days to clean up my act

I mince back again over the various debris
thinking, maybe I'll write tonight, they seem
to be closing in

there's only one way to handle those motherfuckers

the night harness races will have to wait.

THE 7 HORSE

the two old guys behind me were talking.
"look at that 7 horse. he's 35 to one.
how can he be 35 to one?"

"yeah, he looks good to me too," says
the other old guy.

"let's bet him."

"o.k., we'll both bet him."

they get up to make their bets.

I've already bet. I've got 40 win
on the 2nd favorite.
I win four days out of five at a
racetrack. it doesn't seem to be
any problem.

I open my newspaper, read the financial
section, get depressed, turn to the front
pages looking for robbery, rape, murder.

the two old men are back.
"look, the 7 horse is 40 to one now,"
says one of them.

"I can't believe it," says the
other.

the horses are loaded into the gate, the
flag goes up, the bell rings, they break
out.

it's a mile and one sixteenth race, they
take the first turn, go down the backstretch,
circle the last turn, come down the stretch, get
past the finish line.

the 2nd favorite wins by a neck, pays
\$7.80. I make \$116.00 on the race.

there is some silence behind me.
then one of the old men says, "the 7 horse
didn't run at all."

"nope," says the other, "I don't understand
it."

"maybe the jock didn't try," says
his friend.

"that must have been it," says
the other.

like most other men in the world
they believe that their failure
is caused by any and many factors
besides themselves.

I watch the two old guys
gather over their Racing Form
to make their selection in the
next race.

"gee, look at this!" says one of the old guys, "they got Red Rabbit ten to one on the morning line. he looks better than the favorite."

"let's bet him," says the other old guy.

they leave their seats and move toward the betting windows.

AN IMPORTATION

after the reading we went to her house, she had a large house with an iron gate imported all the way from Spain and the house was full of her beautiful daughters who were smiling at me with their lips and their eyes and their bodies but they left

and I sat with the lady in her breakfastnook and we drank and she showed me her book published in Europe some years ago and I looked at the cover and flipped the pages but I felt very unconcerned about ancient European literature: I had my money from the reading and a young girl in a large house (hers) in L.A. was waiting for me

but
this lady was cultured or
once had been and
I enjoyed watching her smoke her long cigarettes and putting on her act

and she told me that I could have my own bedroom that night and I told her that was fine and we drank and drank and she talked and later that night she showed me my bedroom and she went off and I got under the covers for a while
then
I got up
found her bedroom and got into bed with her and we did that ordinary and everyday and everynight thing and then we slept and the next morning

I waked through her imported Spanish gate and I took a cab to the airport and I flew back to my young girl with her large house